

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 SCI-06 HEW-08 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 NSF-04 SMI-01 DRC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO IN

SUBJECT: INDIA GOVERNMENT DEFENSE ON WHO-SPONSORED
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

FOLNG SENT NEW DELHI INFO CALCUTTA AND MADRAS FROM BOMBAY
DTD AUG 1ST.

QUOTE: BOMBAY 1764

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TBIO IN

SUBJ: INDIA GOVERNMENT DEFENSE ON WHO-SPONSORED
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

REF BOMBAY 1747

1. I TALKED TO SALIM ALI AT MID-DAY AND HAVE NOW RECEIVED
FROM HIM TEXT LETTER DATED AUGUST ONE HE CIRCULATING TO PRESS
TODAY UNDER HIS SIGNATURE AS PRESIDENT, BOMBAY NATURAL
HISTORY SOCIETY:

2. "I HAVE READ WITH SOME AMAZEMENT AND GREAT DISTRESS
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THE RENEWED ALLEGATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE AGAINST THE BOMBAY

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY IN PARLIAMENT. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED MISLEADING AND INCORRECT INFORMATION. THE FACTS ARE AS UNDER:

"IN 1958, INDIAN HEALTH AUTHORITIES AND THE WHO WERE ALARMED BY THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF A VIRUS ENCEPHALITIS DISEASE IN THE KYSANUR FOREST OF KARNATAKA, CLOSELY RESEMBLING A DISEASE ENDEMIC IN THE OMSK REGION OF RUSSIA. I WAS INVITED TO A MEETING OF VIROLOGISTS AND ORNITHOLOGISTS CONVENED BY THE WHO AT GENEVA TO CONSIDER THE PROBLEM. AT THIS MEETING IT WAS DECIDED TO INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY OF MIGRANT BIRDS CARRYING VIRUS INFECTED TICKS ON THEIR SOUTHWARD MIGRATION INTO INDIA. THE SOCIETY WAS INVITED TO STUDY THE PROBLEM. FUNDS WERE PROVIDED BY THE WHO. THE TICKS AND BLOOD SMEARS OBTAINED FROM BIRDS WERE STUDIED BY THE VIRUS RESEARCH CENTRE AT POONA AND THE INSTITUTE OF DISEASES WITH NATURAL FOCI AT OMSK, U.S.S.R. RESPECTIVELY. NO SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE OF BIRD INVOLVEMENT IN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE VIRUS WAS OBTAINED AND THE VRC IS CONTINUING ITS SEARCH FOR ALTERNATE HOSTS. THE SOCIETY'S MIGRATION STUDIES CONTINUED FROM THIS BEGINNING AND UP TO THE YEAR 1972, 270,294 BIRDS OF 531 SPECIES WERE RINGED AND RELEASED. THE RECOVERIES OF THESE RINGED BIRDS HAVE BEEN MAINLY FROM RUSSIA.

I SHALL BRIEFLY ANSWER THE THREE SPECIFIC CHARGES LEVELLED AGAINST THE SOCIETY.

1. THAT THE SOCIETY HAS AN ONGOING AGREEMENT WITH THE MIGRATORY ANIMAL PATHOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE US ARMY.

THE SOCIETY AT THE MOMENT DOES NOT HAVE ANY COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENT WITH ANY FOREIGN ORGANIZATION. THE SOCIETY COLLABORATED WITH MAPS IN 1967 AND 1968 ON A CONTINUATION OF THE MIGRATION PROJECT. THE PROJECT PROPOSAL HAD THE APPROVAL OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

2. THAT THE RESEARCH REPORTS SHOULD NOT BE PUBLISHED WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE US ARMY.

THERE WAS NO SUCH CONDITION. THE 1967 CONTRACT REQUIRED TWO ADVANCE COPIES SHOULD BE SENT TO THEM. THE 1968 CONTRACT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS MORE EXPLICIT. I QUOTE "PUBLICATION IN APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS IS ENCOURAGED AS AN IMPORTANT METHOD OF RECORDING AND DISSEMINATING INFORMATION. GRANTEES ARE FREE TO AND SHOULD PUBLISH THE RESULTS OF THEIR WORK AS FREQUENTLY AND EXTENSIVELY AS POSSIBLE. THE CONTENT OF THE PUBLICATIONS IS THE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GRANTEE AND THE RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR. THE GRANTOR WILL NOT RESTRICT, CENSOR OR EDIT ANY MANUSCRIPT SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION."

3. THAT WE ARE SETTING UP A RADAR STATION IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH WITH THE AID OF AMERICAN PERSONNEL FOR STUDYING BIRD MIGRATION.

WE HAVE HAD NO MIGRATION STUDY ACTIVITIES IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH IN ALL THESE YEARS. ALL OUR MIGRATION PROJECTS ARE PLANNED AND MANNED EXCLUSIVELY BY INDIAN PERSONNEL.

THE PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED REPORTS, PROJECT PROPOSAL AND OTHER INFORMATION ARE FREELY AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION AT THE SOCIETY'S PREMISES FOR ANYONE WHO CARES TO SEE THEM. THERE IS NOTHING CONFIDENTIAL OR SECRET OR OF DANGER TO THE COUNTRY'S WELFARE IN THE DATA OBTAINED FROM THE MIGRATION STUDIES OF THE SOCIETY.

OUR MIGRATION PROJECT WITNESSED A DETENTE MUCH BEFORE MR NIXON WENT TO MOSCOW. IT WOULD BE TRAGIC IF WE ARE TO CONSIDER INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AS SOMETHING MALIGNANT."

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